

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

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TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 173399

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 602 - JULY 10, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED NOT
RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. LEBANON. THE CEASEFIRE CONTINUES TO HOLD IN BEIRUT. TENSION REMAINS HIGH, HOWEVER, AS NEITHER THE CHRISTIANS NOR THE SYRIANS APPEAR SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE CEASEFIRE HAS LEFT THE SITUATION, AND EACH SIDE SEEMS TO BE PREPARING FOR A FURTHER ROUND OF FIGHTING. MOREOVER, FATAH UNITS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAVE RETURNED ARTILLERY FIRE ON CHRISTIAN VILLAGES ALONG THE ISRAELI BORDER.

2. THE SYRIANS AND THE CHRISTIANS ARE ALSO CONDUCTING A PROPAGANDA WAR WHICH IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF TENSION. CHRISTIAN BROADCASTS ARE FILLED WITH REPORTS OF SYRIAN ATROCITIES AGAINST THE CIVIL POPULATION, WHILE THE SYRIANS REPORT CHRISTIAN CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS. EACH IS BUTTRESSING ITS OWN CONTENTION THAT THE OTHER IS CREATING
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THE POTENTIAL FOR RESUMED HOSTILITIES.

3. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, LITTLE PROGRESS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE. SARKIS IS STILL ATTEMPTING TO USE THE THREAT OF HIS RESIGNATION TO GAIN CONCESSIONS FROM ALL OF THE FACTIONS IN LEBANON. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HE IS DEMANDING THAT FOUR CONDITIONS BE MET IN ORDER FOR HIM TO REMAIN IN OFFICE:

(A) HE MUST HAVE "EFFECTIVE" CONTROL OVER SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON.

(B) ALL CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM MILITIAS MUST BE DISARMED.

(C) THE CAIRO AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS MUST BE ENFORCED.

(D) HE MUST HAVE A FREE HAND TO GUIDE LEBANESE RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION.

4. BOTH THE SYRIANS AND THE CHRISTIANS HAVE SOME RESERVA-

TIONS ABOUT THE SARKIS DEMANDS. MOREOVER, THE PRESIDENT'S THREAT IS WEAKENED BECAUSE NEITHER THE SYRIANS NOR THE CHRISTIANS ARE FULLY CONVINCED THAT HIS RESIGNATION WOULD BE THAT HARMFUL. BOTH HAVE CONTEMPLATED HIS REMOVAL AT VARIOUS TIMES IN THE PAST. NEVERTHELESS, NEARLY EVERYONE IS URGING SARKIS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE.

5. MEANWHILE, KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER SABAH AL-AHMAD CARRIED MESSAGES TO PRESIDENTS ASSAD AND SARKIS OVER THE WEEKEND. KUWAIT, AS A MEMBER OF THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED AT THE RIYADH SUMMIT OF 1976 AND GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEBANESE AFFAIRS, IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARAB WORLD OF THE CURRENT LEBANESE CRISIS. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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6. ISRAEL. ISRAELI SABER-RATTLING LAST WEEK WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO LIFT THE SYRIAN SIEGE OF THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER OF BEIRUT BUT TO DISABUSE DAMASCUS OF THE NOTION THAT ISRAEL WILL TOLERATE ANY ATTEMPT TO ALTER THE STATUS QUO IN LEBANON. ISRAELI LEADERS ALSO KNOW THAT IF CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE WERE TO COLLAPSE AS A RESULT OF ISRAELI INACTION, BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO BITTER PUBLIC RECRIMINATIONS.

7. ISRAEL HAS TAILORED ITS ASSISTANCE TO THE CHRISTIANS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS SPECIFICALLY TO FRUSTRATE SYRIA'S EFFORTS TO EXTEND ITS INFLUENCE IN LEBANON, AND TO PREVENT THE PALESTINIANS FROM OPERATING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

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9. ISRAELI LEADERS PAY LIP SERVICE TO STRENGTHENING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT MAINLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE US. IN PRACTICE, THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PHALANGIST AND SHAMUNIST FORCES IN THE NORTH WEAKEN THE GOVERNMENT.

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11. DESPITE THEIR INTEREST IN KEEPING SYRIA OFF BALANCE IN LEBANON, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS ARE INTERESTED IN UNDERWRITING THE GRANDIOSE PLANS OF SOME OF THEIR CHRISTIAN CLIENTS TO EVICT THE SYRIANS. BEGIN AND OTHER ISRAELI OFFICIALS PROBABLY ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED BY CHRISTIAN EFFORTS TO DRAG THEM INTO THE PRESENT CRISIS. WE SUSPECT THAT IN ADDITION TO THEIR EFFORTS TO BOOST CHRISTIAN MORALE AND WARN THE SYRIANS, THE ISRAELIS ARE URGING THE CHRISTIANS TO EXERCISE GREATER RESTRAINT. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN)

12. PDRY. THE CAIRO-BASED UNITED NATIONAL FRONT OF SOUTH YEMEN, AN ORGANIZATION OF EXILES OPPOSED TO THE PDRY REGIME, TOLD THE MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY YESTERDAY THAT DURING THE MAY VISIT TO ADEN BY SOVIET ADMIRAL GORSHKOV, THE PDRY AND THE USSR CONCLUDED A SECRET MILITARY TREATY UNDER WHICH THE USSR AGREED TO AID THE PDRY IN THE EVENT OF FOREIGN AGGRESSION WHILE THE PDRY AGREED TO A SOVIET FLEET PRESENCE AT PERIM ISLAND IN THE BAB AL-MANDAB STRAITS AT THE MOUTH OF THE RED SEA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 173399

GENEVA FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 173399 ACTION SINAI INFO ABU DHABI
ALGIERS BAGHDAD BRASILIA CAIRO DOHA JERUSALEM KUWAIT LONDON
MADRID MANAMA MOGADISCIO MOSCOW MUSCAT NICOSIA NOUAKHOTT
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DATED JUL 10:

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